

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A card printer comprising:
 - a source of at least one intermediate transfer sheet;
 - a source of at least one card;
 - a printhead configured to print onto the intermediate transfer sheet;
 - a sheet transport configured to move intermediate transfer sheet past the printhead; and
 - a laminator configured to apply pressure to the card when aligned with the intermediate sheet.

2. The card printer of claim 1 wherein said intermediate transfer sheet is cut to a size providing sheet extensions from at least one side of the card.

3. The card printer of claim 1 wherein said source of one intermediate transfer sheet comprises a plurality of intermediate transfer sheets, and a sheet feeder for feeding individual sheets to the printhead.

4. The card printer of claim 3 wherein the source of at least one card comprises a stack of cards, a card feeder, said card feeder feeding at least one card to overlie the at least one intermediate transfer sheet prior to the laminator

operating to apply pressure to the card and the intermediate transfer sheet.

5. The card printer of claim 4 wherein said laminator comprises a heater for providing lamination heat to the intermediate transfer sheet and card.

6. The card printer of claim 1 wherein said intermediate transfer sheet comprises a printable layer on a film, said printable layer adhering to the card when the laminator has applied heat and pressure to the card, and a guide for separating the film from the card and laminated printable layer after lamination.

7. The card printer of claim 1 comprising a supply of individual sheets corresponding to a desired size relating to a size of the card, each of the sheets having an image receiving layer thereon that is print receptive, a printhead positioned to print onto the image receiving layer of one of the intermediate transfer sheets sequentially presented to the printhead, a sheet transport configured to move the intermediate transfer sheet past the printhead, a laminator comprising a heated roll for receiving the sheet after printing, and for receiving an card in contact with the image receiving layer, after printing, the laminator being operable to laminate the image receiving layer to a surface of

the card, and a device for peeling a backing film the print receptive layer subsequent to lamination.

8. A printer for cards, including identification and credit cards, the printer including a printhead, a supply of individual intermediate transfer sheets, each intermediate transfer sheet including a backing film and a separable print receptive layer carried by the backing film, a sheet drive for moving an individual intermediate transfer sheet from the supply to the printhead for printing on the separable layer of the intermediate transfer sheet, a supply of cards, a drive for the cards and the individual intermediate transfer sheets to move the cards to a position to overlie the image receiving layer on the intermediate transfer sheet, a laminator for applying heat and pressure to the card and intermediate transfer sheet with which it is aligned, and a separator for separating the backing film from the image receiving layer laminated to the card.

9. The card printer of claim 8, wherein the separator includes a ramp surface for engaging a portion of the intermediate transfer sheet extending from an edge of the card after lamination, for guiding the intermediate transfer sheet away from the path of the card and separating the backing film from the image receiving layer laminated on the card.

10. The card printer of claim 8, wherein said printhead comprises an inkjet printhead.

11. The card printer of claim 8, wherein said printhead comprises a dye sublimation printhead, and a supply of dye sublimation ribbon for said dye sublimation printhead.

12. The card printer of claim 8, wherein said intermediate transfer sheet is larger than said card, whereby the printing extends from edge to edge of the card after intermediate transfer sheet and card have been operated on by the laminator.

13. A method of applying an image carrying polymer layer to a card comprising providing a supply of intermediate transfer sheets configured to overlie a card, printing on a surface of a layer on the intermediate transfer sheet, providing a card to overlie the layer on which the printing has taken place, passing the card and the intermediate transfer sheet through a laminator to laminate a portion of the layer to the card, and separating a backing film from the layer to leave the portion of the layer laminated to the card adhering to the card.

14. The method of claim 13, including printing reverse images on the layer.

15. The method of claim 13, including providing sensors for sensing when the card and intermediate transfer sheet are in registry, prior to laminating the layer to the card.

16. The method of claim 13, including providing a supply of a plurality of cards, and a card feeder to move an individual card to a position to overlie the intermediate transfer sheet after printing, and to be indexed to the intermediate transfer sheet for lamination.